HEALTH & DISEASES



This column is taken care of by the "Studygroup for Diseases and the Optimum Keeping and Breeding of Terrarium Animals" of the Belgian Society "Terra". If there is a question concerning health or diseases, feel free to contact the president of the Studygroup: Mr. Hugo Claessen, Arthur Sterckstraat 18, B-2600 Berchem, Belgium. He will try to answer your question in this column to the benefit of all members.

UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO INCUBATE EGGS OF *CHRYSOPELEA ORNATA ORNATISSIMA*.

By: A.M. Steehouder, Theresiaplein 24, 5041 BJ Tilburg, The Netherlands.

At the end of December 1983 a number of *Chrysopelea ornata ornatissima* was imported into Holland from Thailand. Some were returned to the pet shop by the person who had initially bought them. The animals were ill with a viral pneumonia that cleared untreated. I did not know if copulation took place in captivity but six eggs were laid by one female on 9 February 1984. Four were clustered together, two others being laid separate. All eggs were unequal in size: from about 10 mm long to about 30 mm long, very oblong and yellow-white. They were found under a wet newspaper, guarded by the female.
All the eggs were put in an incubator the same day, in moist sand, at a more or less constant tempera-

ture of 30°C.
On 15 February one egg appeared to have turned bad. The others remained good until 23 April, when they started to look grubby. On 25 April the eggs on top of the cluster became so dirty, that I decided to open it. Inside there was a flesh coloured mass of stiff yolk, under which I found a highly developed embryo, light grey with lighter stripes across the body. It was dead.
I then opened the other eggs: one was spoiled, the second and third contained dead embryos, the fourth egg contained an embryo that seemed to react to stimuli, but was dead the next day.
What was the cause of this failure?
Trutnau (Schlangen im Terrarium, I) reports a succesful breeding with incubation temperatures of 25-26°C, in 70-92 days. My incubation temperature might have been too high - though I do not think this is the most plausible cause.
A second possibility is, that the substrate had been too wet. This may be true for the initial incubation period, but the fact that the embryo's were so far developed, seemed to contradict this idea.
A third possibility is, that the mother had been too weak to lay viable eggs, possibly as a result of being catched, transported etc. The fact that the eggs were very unequal would support this idea.